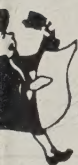


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Town Meeting



BULLETIN OF AMERICA'S TOWN MEETING OF THE AIR

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Modern Woman -- Companion or Competitor?

Moderator, GUNNAR BACK

S p e a k e r s

ALICE THOMPSON

ASHLEY MONTAGU



—COMING—

—May 12, 1953—

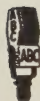
Are We Losing Our Moral Courage?

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Town Meeting

VOL. 18

No. 49



Modern Woman—Companion or Competitor?



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The account of the meeting reported in this Bulletin was transcribed from recordings made of the actual broadcast and represents the exact content of the meeting as nearly as such mechanism permits. The publishers and printer are not responsible for the statements of the speakers or the points of views presented.

THE SPEAKERS' COLUMN

MRS. ALICE THOMPSON—Editor and publisher of *Seventeen*. Publishing and editing *Seventeen* magazine is the professional and best known role of Alice Thompson, but her "attempt to discover, understand, and accept other human beings, and a belief in (her) responsibility toward others," also direct her roles as a wife, mother, and individual in society.

Mrs. Thompson spent the first eleven of her eighteen years in editorial work with Conde Nast, for which she originated *Glamour* magazine at the age of 26, and served as its editor-in-chief for two and a half years. She was women's editor for *Look* magazine in the early war years, then in September, 1945 became executive editor of the newly-formed *Seventeen*. In April, 1949 she became the magazine's publisher, thus moving into a unique position—the only woman magazine publisher in the country. Later she also assumed the duties of editor-in-chief.

Mrs. Thompson's primary interest in people began with the study of literature, sociology and economics at Swarthmore College. It has since been enlivened by an energetic personal life as the wife of an advertising executive and the mother of a young son and a teen-age daughter. She is frequently asked to fill speaking engagements before teen-age groups all over the country, at educational meetings, as well as on radio and T-V.

DR. M. F. ASHLEY MONTAGU—Chairman of the Department of Anthropology, Rutgers University. Ashley Montagu was born in London and is a naturalized United States citizen. After receiving his early education in a private school in London, he attended the University of London and the University of Florence, Italy. From 1926-27 he was a scientific worker at the British Museum of Natural History and the next year did research at Columbia University. He was Assistant Professor of Anatomy at New York University from 1931-38, and in 1937 took a Ph.D. degree in anthropology at Columbia. From 1938 to 1948 Dr. Montagu was Associate Professor of Anatomy at Hahnemann Medical College and Hospital, Philadelphia. He has been Chairman and Professor of the Rutgers University

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Modern Woman—Companion or Competitor?

Announcer:

Tonight's Town Meeting is back in New York City and comes to you from the auditorium of the National Headquarters of the Young Women's Christian Association. The YWCA was founded in 1855 by a small group of women, and today, ninety-eight years since its founding, is at work in 66 countries all over the world, and has a total membership of 3,000,000 in the United States. From its modest beginning, the YWCA has broadened its activities and is now the parent organization of the National Traveler's Aid Association, the Women's Exchanges, the Day Nurseries and the National Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs.

The YWCA is active in over 1,300 communities. It strives to create racial and inter-faith understanding and works for the protection of minorities. The YWCA is interested in all legislation concerning women and serves as a beacon to all peoples interested in creating a better world. Now to preside as moderator for tonight's discussion here is ABC's well-known Washington news reporter, Gunnar Back.

Moderator Back:

Thank you very much. I begin Tonight's Town Meeting with apprehension, not to say with some downright fear. Our subject is: "Modern Woman—Companion or Competitor?" On the stage of the YWCA auditorium in New York City, as a part of the climax of the National celebration of YWCA week, is Mr. Ashley Montagu, an anthropologist who has written a new book called, plain out and out, *The Natural Superiority of*

Women. In some two hundred pages, Dr. Montagu, the Ph.D., has sought to show, indeed he has shown, to me at least, that man is only an incomplete female, that women's brains are proportionately larger than man's. The eye-raiser, the crusher for me, having devoted so much of my life to being a man as best I could, is Dr. Montagu's contention that a man's life is warped from the day he realizes he can't have a baby.

Thus speaks the anthropologist tonight, and of such stuff is tonight's discussion made, before an audience of the women of New York's YWCA. But I want you to know it isn't trivial and frivolous stuff that we are going to talk about tonight, and there is a woman on the platform, no anthropologist she, but she has been out in the man's world, which Dr. Montagu says men have kept to themselves by forcing women into inferiority. She has been out in the world. I speak of Alice Thompson, publisher and editor of the magazine *Seventeen*.

Mrs. Thompson has done distinguished magazine editorial work in the past, and for some time she has done this work, climaxing in her editorship and the publishing of the magazine *Seventeen*. She is the mother of a young son and a teen-age daughter and in no way does she bear the mark of the fighting feminist. As a matter of fact, she comes to the program tonight having lost none of her charm for having spent a long time in the world which man has created. Mrs. Thompson, how do you approach our subject tonight here in the auditorium of the YWCA in New York, the subject: "Modern Woman—Compan-

ion or Competitor?" Here is Mrs. Alice Thompson.

Mrs. Thompson:

I assume I should approach this subject with deep gratitude to both you and Dr. Montagu—but let's really approach it. The question is companion or competitor, and I would like to change that just a little to read companion and partner or competitor. I would prefer always to be a companion-partner, but I must admit that in today's world I have been frequently forced into the role of competitor. This has not been of my choosing; I have done everything to offset it. This is a role that has been thrust upon me by men.

Mr. Back: That's all?

Mrs. Thompson: That's all.

Mr. Back: Thank you very much. Ashley Montagu is the Chairman of the Department of Anthropology at Rutgers University. He has written widely in his field. His books have such titles as *On Being Human*, *On Being Intelligent*. He is a native of London, English educated, now an American citizen. So here is Dr. M. F. Ashley Montagu on a favorite subject of his, the subject of women and their proper role. Dr. Montagu.

Dr. Montagu:

Well, I think in dealing with the title of this evening's discussion, Modern Woman—Companion or Competitor?, I must say that I don't like the word companion any more than I like the word competitor. The idea of a companion suggests one who has to keep company with or associate with someone else. Why should women have to keep company with men? Why shouldn't men and women mutually keep company with each other? And the best word for

that, I would suggest, is partner. As for woman being a competitor of man, this is ridiculous. Woman always has been the partner of man, and moreover always has been his principal support.

If it had been left to men to support themselves they would have fallen to pieces long ago, and as every obstetrician knows that if men had to have babies they simply wouldn't have been able to support the task and the human race would have become extinct. Therefore, I suggest that we don't talk of women as competitors; it is only men who talk of women as competitors. Women don't want to compete with men; they want to co-operate with men; they want to be partners with men. They don't want to strive against men to achieve the same goals; they want to work with men to achieve the same goals.

Mr. Back: Thank you, Dr. Montagu. Well, so far we have had the title taken apart a bit, the title of our discussion tonight. Do you want to argue as to whether a person should be called a partner or a companion? Dr. Montagu isn't sure that he accepts the word companion.

Mrs. Thompson: Well, I am afraid I can't quarrel with him about it, because I agree with him in my original statement that I much prefer the word partner. I could facetiously take exception with that statement of who wants to be a companion of man. I think most women in the audience and elsewhere will admit they'd like to be companions of men.

Dr. Montagu: I didn't raise the question, Mrs. Thompson, at all, rhetorically, who wants to be. I think that is a misunderstanding. If I did make that statement, it was just a slip of my right cerebral

hemisphere or maybe my wrong cerebral hemisphere. (*Laughter*) I perfectly agree, in fact I think I said, that I would like to see men and women mutually be companions to each other.

Mrs. Thompson: Well, I can't take any exception to that. Dr. Montagu is not representative, I am afraid, of his sex. I would prefer that he were, because my own experience in a wide world outside has been that it does not share his views at all. I have been forced, whether I like it or not, into this role of competition particularly, or rather only, in the business world.

I think without trying to sound abject, and I think I can speak for all of the women who work, that from the first day we go to business we learn that we start somewhat 50 yards behind the male of the species. We are hired only for clerical jobs or only with primary business tool training; we are hired at less money for the same jobs; we are constantly put upon, shall I say? It is a constant challenge to prove that we can function in a business world. And Oh, goodness! if we slip just a little bit we are behaving "just like a woman" and if we perform well, "we think like a man." (*Applause*)

Mr. Back: Let me see if I can go back for just a moment and see what common ground we are standing on. You both then agree that the sexes should not compete. Is that right, Dr. Montagu?

Dr. Montagu: Absolutely. If there is to be any kind of competition, I would suggest that it were a co-operative kind of competition rather than a competitive kind of co-operation.

Mr. Back: And you agree that woman should be the partner of

man, and not just the companion. It's just a matter of debate over the word itself.

Dr. Montagu: Well, if she would be the partner of man, man would be her partner and they could both be companions.

Mr. Back: All right, we have agreed on that. So now Mrs. Thompson has indicated that the woman is forced by man into competition, however, when she does go out into the man's world. Do you want to carry on from Mrs. Thompson on that, Dr. Montagu?

Dr. Montagu: Yes, I would very much like to. The very fact that men do push women into these disadvantageous situations compels women to develop a certain kind of subtle aggressiveness, vastly more subtle than the male is generally capable of. This puts them into a competitive frame of mind, because since they have had obstacles put into their way their purpose in life now becomes the business of overcoming the obstacles, and this of course leads to a competitive process. But if men call women competitive, it is largely because men have made some women competitive. One mustn't fall into the error of believing that all women resort to competition. Women are wise enough to listen to men's advice, and any woman who is wise enough to listen to men's advice is not stupid enough to follow that advice. (*Laughter and applause*)

Mr. Back: Well, I don't think the man is going to fare very well tonight, but I nevertheless would like to turn to you, Mrs. Thompson, to find out how you think man happened to force women into this horrible situation.

Mrs. Thompson: Well, I don't want to go into the lengthy his-

torical processes of it, and besides I don't think I really know enough to. That would be more in Dr. Montagu's province. I do say that in the last fifty years, as we women have emerged into the business world, that evidently we were something to fear. I don't know why we were feared. I don't like to say that perhaps we did challenge a bit, that occasionally we have unique and special gifts to offer. Quite seriously, you see I don't think that we are superior or inferior.

I happen to think we are just different, and that we have particular and peculiar talents to offer to business and in any other outside world. But men should not fear us; they should not try to keep us away from it. I have frequently said to young women working for me, particularly when they first come in and are disturbed to discover that they are paid less and so on and when that first aggressive, competitive spirit starts forward, I explain to them, "Look, don't compete with men, if I had wanted a man for this job, I would have hired a man. You have peculiar and special talents, and this is the thing for which you were hired." I only wish that men would recognize this too. (*Applause*)

Mr. Back: I've heard a lot of men say, "I don't want to work for her because she's a woman. I don't want to have a boss who is a woman."

Mrs. Thompson: Oh, yes, the men have done a wonderful job of even convincing the women that we are unpleasant.

Mr. Back: How do you feel about that, Dr. Montagu?

Dr. Montagu: Oh, I want to say before I answer that question that you'll notice the natural su-

periority of Mrs. Thompson. You see Mrs. Thompson is at a great disadvantage here. If she proves that I am wrong in my thesis that women are naturally superior, she thereby proves her natural superiority. If on the other hand I prove the contrary, I prove the natural superiority of women. So she can't win anyway. But notice that she said in all humility, and quite seriously, she believed that women were not superior to men. Have you ever heard a man say that he didn't think that men were not superior, that he thought that men were not superior to women? You see as a superior person, Mrs. Thompson almost naturally makes this humble statement, but as an inferior person the male, of course, always puts himself out in front. He is superior, and everyone knows it.

Mr. Back: Mrs. Thompson?

Mrs. Thompson: Mr. Back, I think Dr. Montagu is disproving his statement right now. He is pointing out that he himself is willing to say that men are inferior, that women are superior. I happen to be married to a man whose thesis is this too, and I happen to believe that he means it sincerely. I have known a number of men in business who were quite willing to say that in certain areas women were superior and that in certain areas they thought *they* were superior. I cannot go along with this condemnation of men in trying to also prove that I have a right to function as a human being first and as a woman second.

Dr. Montagu: Oh, no, I am not in the least trying or attempting to condemn men. I mean men stand self-condemned, without any help from me. (*Laughter*)

Mr. Back: Dr. Montagu, I think the burden of proof has been

thrown on you for the moment, so could you tell us why or how you have traced the natural superiority of women? How did this horrible thing get started in the first place? Where were the early mistakes made that kept women from achieving what they should have achieved?

Dr. Montagu: Like most scientific statements and most scientific problems, you could write over the entrance of every scientific laboratory, this problem when solved will have been found to be simple. And this applies here too. Really, women have had for the greater part of their history the disadvantage of being of smaller size and muscularly less powerful than men and also the advantage of giving birth to children and the problems that are concomitant with raising children. This has kept them somewhat more sedentary than the male has been, who has had to go out and collect the food, hunt and devise the implements, and therefore develop a reputation for being quite a clever fellow and a well-traveled one, in comparison to the more sedentary female.

And if a female tried to put up any objections, he could always enforce his will upon her by just slapping her down, and you know these marvelous cartoons that every cartoonist has been guilty of—prehistoric man dragging his female by the hair with a variety of assorted bumps on her head produced by a shillalah which he is also carrying in one hand. This may be an exaggeration, but it hints of something of the truth. In other words, women have been kept down by men, and men have been extremely jealous of women. But think of all the tremendous number of taboos, the punish-

ments, that have been visited by men upon women. They have regarded women as these abysmal mysteries, when the only mystery about them is nothing more than the male's opacity. I mean the thickness of his head and the glaze upon his vision which prevented him from seeing what was perfectly obvious.

Men are very much slower on the uptake than women. They are less bright than women. All the tests prove this, and they are available for anyone who cares to check them. But women have been repressed largely because men have really felt considerable inferiorities in relation to the natural functions, particularly the capacity of women to have babies. Men are unconscious of their jealousy of this, and of course they say, "me" and burst into roars of laughter. "I have never wanted to have a baby; it's absurd." (*Laughter.*) But listen to them when they produce something like a new gadget. They say, "You see women have been in the kitchen for years and years but it's taken a man to produce a gadget. This is my *baby*." Or, "I've been delivered of a new idea," or, "stop, don't interrupt me; I'm pregnant with ideas; I'm just about to give birth to something."

Mr. Back: Dr. Montagu, do women talk more than men?

Dr. Montagu: Indeed they do, much more sense.

Mr. Back: Well, I thought maybe we'd better let Mrs. Thompson talk for just a moment. Are you going along with everything that has been said by Dr. Montagu so far?

Mrs. Thompson: I think it would be most unchivalrous of me, to my entire sex, to contradict one

single thing that Dr. Montagu has said. But as a matter of fact, I think that in an attempt to carry a torch for a very fine idea that Dr. Montagu somewhat burns it too brightly. I don't think that men have been quite so jealous of us; I don't think that they kept us down completely; I don't think that we have been discriminated against as a minority in the last fifty or sixty years, let's say. And as a matter of fact, somehow or other, whatever the men have done to us, it has only succeeded in sharpening our wits quite a bit, and I think that we are coming very much into our own. However, I like to hear Dr. Montagu talk. Let him go on.

Mr. Back: Yes, I intend to. But, Dr. Montagu, in your book you list many things that we can recognize instantly as proof of your thesis that women are superior to men. I haven't time to go into all of them, but let's just go into one very briefly—the question of whether women are more emotional than men and the question of why women used to swoon in the 19th century. Could you quickly go over that for us?

Dr. Montagu: Well, I don't know how quickly. If I may skip you for a moment, Gunnar, and appeal to Mrs. Thompson to inform me when my pilot light goes out and I am giving off nothing but gas. (*Laughter*)

Mr. Back: Well, what was the swoon used for, Dr. Montagu?

Dr. Montagu: Well, the swoon was a very interesting device developed, I may say invented, by women—without the assistance of men—to draw attention, attention which was frequently not given to them by males, to their own existence and their own needs.

About the only time many Victorian women received evidences of affection or love from their spouses was when they went into a swoon, or developed what was called the vapors.

Mr. Back: Mrs. Thompson, do you want to answer that?

Mrs. Thompson: We have a few of those devices left. We just don't call them by quite the same names now. I think that most of the tricks and devices of our lady ancestors of Victorian times have been translated very competently into today's times.

Mr. Back: Dr. Montagu, you made a very strong case and I wish we could talk about it tonight. You show that men have hysteria as well as women; you show that more men go insane than women; that more men drink to excess; you show that, generally speaking, the women have shown through the years a capacity for survival which is your proof that, at least from that point of view, woman is superior to man. But I want to turn to the questions from the audience here at the YWCA auditorium in New York because a lot of questions are going to be asked, I know, about the wife who goes out to work. Is there chance of divorce in that home as against the case where the wife doesn't?

Each week on Town Meeting we ask our speakers to discuss a question sent in by a listener. We feel that in this way all of our listeners have an opportunity to participate directly in Town Meeting. We hope that you will send us a question for next week's program which will originate in Wilkes College in Wilkes Barre, Pennsylvania, where we are looking forward to seeing our listeners in northeastern Pennsylvania. Later on

I will tell you about the subject and speakers for next Tuesday.

Tonight the question chosen as most appropriate by our program staff comes from Mr. Dan Dial, of 3531 James Street, Dallas, Texas. He will receive a beautiful 20-volume set of the American People's Encyclopedia, and Mr. Dial's question is, "With modern woman's increasing interest and activities outside of the home, plus other influencing factors, what is to replace, or at least supplement, the disappearing family life?" Let's address that first to the editor of *Seventeen*, Mrs. Alice Thompson.

Mrs. Thompson: I only hope that the encyclopedia will make this gentleman be more statistically minded and more factually minded. The American family is not disappearing. As a matter of fact, it is very much on the increase, and the size of the American family is very much on the increase. I think this question is a rather typical "viewer with alarm" and has no roots in the facts.

Mr. Back: Could you cite a fact to show that the American family is not disappearing? We hear that TV is bringing the family back, it has been separated so long, and things like that.

Mrs. Thompson: Well, I can only say that there are a lot of statistics that we of the magazine field are very familiar with, which is

that the marriage age is dropping. The average marriage age for a girl today is 18, their avowed intention, and according to the best statistics they are accomplishing it, is families of 4 and 5 children, a real revival of the big family. This is scarcely done with modern woman only outside of the home and involved in a lot of other interests. She is still a home body.

Mr. Back: Thank you, Mrs. Thompson. Dr. Montagu, will you address yourself to this question sent in by Mr. Dial?

Dr. Montagu: I agree completely with Mrs. Thompson, and I would further add that all the evidences suggest that the family which has for some time now been in a period of transition is about to enter, it seems to me, upon its healthiest phase of development, where the principal participants in it, namely, the father and the mother of the children, are coming to a much more profound understanding of their obligations as parents and as citizens.

Mr. Back: And as man comes to understand woman and woman's superiority it's going to be a happier home.

Dr. Montagu: I certainly think so.

Mr. Back: Well, now let's turn to our audience here in New York and see what they have in store for you, Dr. Montagu and Mrs. Thompson.

THE SPEAKERS' COLUMN

(Continued from page 2)

department of Anthropology since 1949 and is Director of Research, New Jersey Committee for Mental Health and Physical Development.

Dr. Montagu also has been Lecturer for the Veterans Administration Postgraduate Training Program in Psychiatry and a consultant to UNESCO. He is an advisory editor of *Child-Family Digest* and associate editor of *Isis*. Since 1938 he has had several books published including *Man's Most Dangerous Myth: The Fallacy of Race*, *Adolescent Sterility*, *An Introduction to Physical Anthropology*, *On Being Human*, *On Being Intelligent*, *Statement on Race*, and *Darwin, Competition and Cooperation*.

QUESTIONS, PLEASE!

Questioner: Is it possible for a woman to compete on the basis of her ability alone?

Mrs. Thompson: To compete in the business world? Well, I don't believe that I have used any other qualities at all, not that I know of. Yes, I think it is quite possible. There are times when there are handicaps, but with a little patience and a little understanding and a great deal of affection for the male of the species one can overcome the handicaps.

Questioner: Thank you.

Mr. Back: Thank you very much. The next question goes to Dr. Montagu from a young lady.

Questioner: Are the children of working parents better adjusted?

Dr. Montagu: The evidence indicates, and there have been some studies made in several towns in the United States, that the children of working parents on the whole are better adjusted.

Mr. Back: And you leave it with that statistic?

Dr. Montagu: Yes.

Questioner: Mrs. Thompson, do you think that women who stay home, the housewife, should get wages?

Mrs. Thompson: No, I do not think that women who stay home as housewives should get wages. I think this is a distortion of the whole family pattern. I think man and woman are partners in the home and that they should be free and equal partners in the sharing of the family income, no matter who produces it.

Questioner: This is for Dr. Montagu: I would like to know if the increased necessity for moth-

ers to work outside the home has contributed to juvenile delinquency.

Dr. Montagu: That is a very difficult question to answer. In some cases one would have to say that this has been so, but again a number of studies that have been made on working mothers and their homes and their children, these indicate that the homes are better organized with mothers working outside the home than when mothers are at home, and that the children get a great deal more intelligent affection from working mothers than from non-working mothers.

Mr. Back: Do you want to comment on that reply, Mrs. Thompson?

Mrs. Thompson: I would like to make one comment. I think that you can be confused here. In the case of the working mother in the lower income brackets, if society does not provide any kind of play school, shall we say, or nursery school or day care for her youngster, then the charge of delinquency is upon the community, not upon the fact that the woman has to work.

Mr. Back: Okay, I've got all kinds of notes here that I have made. I shouldn't come into this thing, but I am sure that people listening will wonder about the neighbor next door who is working, who has a maid, but the maid doesn't do a very good job of taking care of those children after they come back from school between four and six. The neighbors are worried. So I am just wondering whether there is a problem there. What do you think, Dr. Montagu?

Dr. Montagu: Well, it depends

entirely upon the individual family set-up. This is a situation that can be envisaged in all its dimensions and, therefore, taken care of intelligently. One can provide play-mates for children during the hours in which the mother will be away. One can also provide intelligent help. One can also provide community assistance, and this is where the community falls down most frequently.

Mrs. Thompson: I would like to mention an emotional point here, which is that the working woman is frequently, or shall we say occasionally, jealous of the woman who can stay home, and that the woman who stays home is occasionally jealous of the woman who works. We are still ambivalent, my sex, in this new pattern of ours, we are occasionally jealous of one another. It is very easy for the lady up the street to be quite jealous of the woman who has what she thinks to be an exciting life outside and hence criticize what is happening to her children. I don't say that this is true in the instance that was mentioned but it can be true. I have been the target of it.

Mr. Back: Well, this is pretty much of a ladies audience, an audience of young women at the YWCA in New York, but here comes a gentleman with a question. Will you state it, please?

Questioner: Mrs. Thompson, in the business world, doesn't a woman pretty much compete with men the same way a man is continuously competing with other men?

Mrs. Thompson: Yes, very definitely, except that we do feel that the cards are a bit stacked. For instance, we do start at a lower place usually, so we have to make

up that distance. We are always open to the charge, if we argue fiercely and loudly, that we are behaving badly and that we are behaving like women. We are also accused of being emotional. We are also always open to the charge of losing our femininity, a charge that is never leveled against a man when he merely fights for his point of view. It is not easy to compete as a man competing with other men. It is slightly less easy, but may I say fascinating, to compete in a man's world as a woman.

Mr. Back: Thank you very much. Do you see hope for some changes?

Mrs. Thompson: Oh, yes. I think there are lots and lots of changes. I have seen them in the twenty years I have been working.

Questioner: What qualities do you say a good companion should have?

Dr. Montagu: I should say the last question answered that question in part. In the first place, one must get into the frame of mind where one treats other persons not as members of this or that particular group, this or that race, this or that sex, but as persons, human beings in their own right, no matter what group they may belong to. That kind of attitude of mind is a mature attitude of mind, and of course the principal trait one needs in human relations is a sympathetic understanding of the other person's situation—being able to put oneself in their place and also persuading them to put themselves in one's own place. (*Applause.*)

Questioner: I direct my question to Mrs. Thompson. What is the modern device of women that compares with the Victorian swoon?

Mrs. Thompson: Do you mind if I ask all the men to leave the

room? I might give away trade secrets. No, quite seriously I would say we do have our own vapors; we coast under labor laws that entitle us to one day a month off from work, shall we say; that we are allowed to be erratic at times. I think we have a number of others that I am not going to expose to a male audience.

Mr. Back: Dr. Montagu, do you care to comment or shall we go on to the next question?

Dr. Montagu: Well, it would be most ignoble and unchivalrous of me to make any comment on the subject at all.

Mr. Back: All right, then we will go to the next question.

Questioner: Dr. Montagu, do you think that participation in business and public affairs tend to masculinize the modern female as to her mental processes?

Dr. Montagu: Oh, no, I think that most females are so far beyond males in their mental processes that they couldn't possibly be retarded. *(Applause.)*

Mr. Back: Well, that took care of that very rapidly, didn't it? Well, we have a YWCA member of Lebanon who has come into the middle aisle. Will you let us have your question?

Questioner: It is coming from a country where women have just got the right to vote and be elected. I would like to know whether you think that the presence of women in government makes for better government?

Mrs. Thompson: My own feeling is no, not particularly. You see I don't think that we have an exclusive on civic virtue. We thought so when we were fighting for suffrage. We thought we were going to make all political situations nobler, cleaner, finer. It turned out

that none of these virtues are sex virtues at all. I don't think we can look for it in Lebanon either.

Dr. Montagu: May I say something in answer to that question? I am afraid I can't quite agree with Mrs. Thompson. On the other hand, I think that the world would benefit very greatly by the presence of more women in government. When one considers that in the United States at the present time there are about 699 legislators who have been elected by the people, more than half of which people consist of women, and that only 11 women are in these houses of the legislature at the present time, if there was ever a case of disproportionate representation or taxation without representation this is it.

Mr. Back: I hope that the members of our audience don't mind if I steal just a moment from them by asking that old question that I would like to ask, is there anything wrong with having a woman as President of the United States? What would you say, Mrs. Thompson?

Mrs. Thompson: No, I don't think there would be anything wrong at all. But I think that to pick a president on the basis of the fact that it was a female is as ridiculous as to taboo it because she is a female.

Dr. Montagu: Hear, Hear.

Mr. Back: People would say right away she couldn't stand the pace or she would get all excited at the moment of high decision.

Mrs. Thompson: No, we're very tough and we are not hysterical or emotional. Sometimes we use this as the Victorian device, but it is usually an act.

Mr. Back: Dr. Montagu, you have gone to great lengths indeed

to show that hysteria is by no means an exclusive property of the female, haven't you?

Dr. Montagu: Exactly. As a matter of fact, in the 19th Century it was asserted by most respectable physicians that hysteria was a condition limited exclusively to women, whereas in fact we now know that quite a number of those physicians knew that this was not true, and most physicians who are concerned with these matters know that there are at least as many men who suffer from hysteria in many more varieties, by the way, than women do.

Questioner: Mr. Montagu, will you tell us if there is any evidence that men are deteriorating?

Dr. Montagu: No, I think that with the advent of my book, *The Natural Superiority of Women*, we have at least the first evidence that men are not deteriorating.

Questioner: Mrs. Thompson, I would like to know whether you think equality between men and women has increased or decreased the happiness of the average woman.

Mrs. Thompson: The equality? I think it has increased the happiness of the average woman, and as man comes to accept it, it has vastly increased his happiness.

Dr. Montagu: I agree, completely.

Questioner: Dr. Montagu, I would like to ask why, if women are superior to men, are they traditionally paid less than men for doing the same job?

Dr. Montagu: Well, largely because men have foisted this myth upon the world that women are inferior, that they cannot perform as ably as men can and therefore do not deserve to be paid as well as men are paid. You can see the

obvious economic advantages to merit this?

Questioner: Yes, I can. Does that mean competition, then?

Dr. Montagu: Oh no, it means that men of course have competed with women from the very beginning of time, and, as is the custom, they have projected their own processes of competition now upon women and are turning the accusation against women.

Mr. Back: Okay, we will continue with the questions. I see no more males in the audience, but here is a young lady.

Questioner: Dr. Montagu, how can you explain the much shorter life span of man, even though man works from sun to sun, and they say a woman's work is never done?

Dr. Montagu: It's really largely because women are constitutionally stronger than men. Men have only one kind of strength, and that is the muscular strength with which they are biologically endowed. But this, in an age when over 90 percent of the world's work is done by machines, is not only no longer an advantage but it is a positive disadvantage, because the possessor of this muscularity holds it at the cost of a greater metabolic rate. He burns up more quickly and therefore burns out more quickly.

Mrs. Thompson: I am sure that that is scientifically sound — I know it would be, coming from Dr. Montagu—but I would like to inject another, a little gentler, point. Man has not been allowed in recent years two normal outlets, as a matter of fact he never was allowed them, that women are. We are always able as a sex to confess when we are inadequate and to cry when we are scared. This has been denied men, and I think they are horrified and frightened very fre-

quently, and that it tends to shorten life.

Questioner: Dr. Montagu, how can the husband of a working woman give a greater sense of security to her so that she makes her best contribution to the job she is doing?

Dr. Montagu: By respecting her for the person she is and by reading *The Natural Superiority of Women* and living up to it. (Laughter.) (Applause.)

Mr. Back: Well, I am very grateful to you, Mrs. Thompson and to you, Dr. Montagu, for your discussion and thanks to this fine YWCA audience for its questions.

On behalf of Town Hall, we wish to express our appreciation to Miss Mollie E. Sullivan, Director of the Public Information Department of the Young Women's Christian Association, and Miss Henriette K. Harrison, Radio-TV consultant.



FOR FURTHER STUDY OF THIS WEEK'S TOPIC

Background Questions

1. Is the role of the American woman in the home, economy, and society very different from that of her counterpart in Europe? Asia?
 - a. Is the American woman freer, more political, more dominant, etc., than women elsewhere?
 - b. Is the American woman more competitive? If so, is this because she has moved out of the home into the formerly masculine world? Or, is it because American society is more competitive than others?
2. Are American men and women confused about their roles in our society?
 - a. If so, is it due to a breakdown of the social fabric?
 - b. Or, are we going through a period of transition, especially with regard to family relationships?
3. Is the American woman in a subservient position to men? If so, in which areas of life is this subservience most marked?
4. How have the following factors affected the relationship of the modern American woman to her home?
 - increased higher education
 - smaller families and homes
 - labor saving devices and higher standards of living
 - increased preoccupation of her husband with interests and obligations outside the home
 - increased preoccupation of her children with interests outside the home
 - greater number of services now provided by the community
5. How has woman's entrance into the business and professional worlds affected her marital relationship?
 - a. Should "breadwinning" and "providing" be primarily masculine preoccupations?
 - b. Does woman's competition in these fields seem psychologically emasculating to many men, who regard the role of "good provider" as traditionally theirs?
 - c. Do women with interests and occupations outside the home make

- more satisfactory companions? Are they more capable of understanding and sharing their husbands' problems?
- d. Has the exodus of American women from the home into business and industry increased the nation's divorce rate?
 - e. Or, has a woman's job capacity provided the family with a form of insurance which adds to the stability of the home?
 - f. Are most women in business and industry today there by choice or because of economic necessity?
 - g. Are a woman's job opportunities as good as those of a man? What is the current status of equal rights—equal pay legislation?
6. What effect does a woman's working have on her children?
 - a. Should the mother of very small children work at all, except in cases of dire need?
 - b. Is there enough part time employment to answer the needs of mothers of small income families?
 - c. Is the woman who participates in outside activities, whether gainfully employed or not, a more sympathetic, interesting mother? Or, is she too preoccupied to give her children sufficient attention?
 - d. Is the working mother a less possessive mother?
 7. Has woman's artistic and intellectual potentialities been fully realized? Or, has custom stunted her development along these lines?
 - a. Do men accept women as intellectual equals? Or, do they find educated women intellectual as well as economic competitors?
 - b. Has equal education opened up areas of shared interest and enjoyment for both men and women?
 - c. Does the educated woman face the dilemma of having a broader capacity than just that of wife and mother?
 8. Evaluate woman's role in the social welfare, educational and community activities of the nation. Is it true that she dominates these areas of activity?
 9. Has male-female competition been as strong in the political field as in the business world? Or, have they worked successfully as political partners?
 10. Has the woman assumed the dominant role in American family life?
 - a. Has the American male lost the feeling of being the "man of the family"? Has he abdicated his parental role?
 - b. Do American women shut men out of intimate association with their children?
 - c. What is the phenomenon called "Momism"? Is it strictly an American condition?

REPORT FROM MOSCOW

You will remember that several weeks ago Town Meeting presented a special panel discussion by "grassroots" American editors who had just returned from a tour of Europe and the Middle East. Comprising twenty-two newsmen from small town papers and radio stations, eight members of the party, headed by publisher James L. Wick, remained behind when special permission was granted them to visit the Soviet Union. This marked an exciting opportunity—the first time since 1947 that such a group had been allowed inside Russia, and it was

our hope that "Part 2" of the editors' report could be likewise aired on Town Meeting.

Meantime, however, great interest, curiosity and in some cases misgivings about the unique journalistic event was being generated here at home. By the time the eight reporters landed in New York on Saturday, April 11th, it was decided to set up a special ABC news conference at once, to be aired on both radio and television. While many Town Meeting listeners may have heard the program that Saturday night, we felt that the editors' impressions were of sufficient interest and importance to outline them here:

Asked how the Russian people reacted to the visiting Americans, Mrs. Jane McIlvaine of the Downingtown, Pa., *Archive* said, "They were extremely curious. They followed us wherever we went. They looked at us as though we were visitors from Mars . . . and from the government point of view . . . I think they were a little uneasy about how they were going to handle us also."

There was disagreement within the group as to where the host relation left off and "surveillance" began. At least two editors believed their hotel rooms were wired. Others found no evidence of this, adding that they had no sense of being followed while exploring the city by themselves.

Mr. Wick, leader of the party, was questioned on whether he thought they could get a "true picture" of life in the Soviet Union on a government conducted tour. He readily admitted limitations of the 7-day stay, but still maintained that something was to be learned both from its conducted portions (about two-thirds of the time) and from the remaining periods spent by themselves and with other Americans living in Moscow.

One of the women reporters was asked to describe merchandise found in the stores and how women looked in Moscow. Mrs. Helen Biddle of WHUN, Huntington, Pa., reported on a fashion show she had attended where the emphasis was on practicality rather than style. Fabrics were shoddy, she said, and later it was discovered that only patterns for making the clothes were available—at very high prices. "As far as the stores are concerned, you don't find much in them."

Eugene Simon, of the *Valley Daily News*, Tarentum, Pa., reported that the Russian men he saw on the streets were better dressed than he had expected them to be . . . generally in a "serviceable, bargain counter type of suit that's available here in America."

The existence of concentration camps was dismissed by Russians with whom the group spoke as so much anti-Soviet propaganda. Mr. Wick told the ABC audience that he is now filing a request to look up the concentration camps that are shown on our maps to find out what they really are.

Answering criticism which had been raised that the visiting journalists were being "used" by the Russians "to turn out stories based on the facilities that were arranged for them," Mr. Simon said it should be remembered that the Soviet Government didn't request them to come to Russia. The editors requested the visit. Most of the things they asked to see—including the Kremlin—were arranged for, the one big exception being the inside of workers' homes.

All members of the party emphatically agreed that "what we saw was better than nothing," and in piercing the Iron Curtain, "you have to start some place."